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BREASTFEEDING COUNSELOR TRAINING COMES TO PINELLAS



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Pinellas women ready to become Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC) to help other women successfully breastfeed will be getting their training close to home in December.



The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) is hosting a week of CLC training during Monday-Friday, Dec. 4-8, at its Mid-County center, 8751 Ulmerton Rd., Largo. The training has reached its maximum capacity and is not accepting new signups for this session. (The next Tampa Bay area training will be in Clearwater in February 2018. For information about the training courses, go to <http://www.healthychildren.cc/clc.htm>.)

The 40-hour training prepares attendees to help mothers with common breastfeeding problems. After taking the course, the attendees sit for an exam to qualify for the CLC credential. This is the first year that the department has hosted this training.

“Breastfeeding is an important tool in the fighting against infant mortality and health inequity,” said DOH-Pinellas Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator Grace Peterson. “New research from *The Lancet* reveals that, if the majority of new moms breastfeed their babies, more than 800,000 children's lives would be saved every year.”

In Florida, about 80 percent of new mothers initiate breastfeeding, but that number decreases dramatically by six months to about 35 percent of mothers. One reason may be the lack of support for breastfeeding, which is a learned skill. As with other biological processes, there are many variations of how mothers experience breastfeeding. When professional helpers such as doctors, nurses, social workers or WIC staff obtain the CLC certificate, they know much more about how to assist breastfeeding clients.

The CLC training, a program of Healthy Children's Center for Breastfeeding, is held in cities place in cities around the nation. The program has been held in the Tampa Bay area annually, but this is the first time it's been hosted by the county health department.

DOH-Pinellas' WIC program has breastfeeding peer counselors to assist moms and an after-hours Warm Line, (727) 824-6997, for issues that arise after hours or on weekends. To make sure breastfeeding moms have the support they need to continue helping their babies grow, counselors answer the calls and offer advice.

For information about DOH-Pinellas, go to <http://pinellas.floridahealth.gov/index.html> or follow

us on Twitter [@HealthyPinellas](#).

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